

CLAIMS:

1 1. A method of automatically tracking a certificate
2 pedigree comprising:

3 providing a new user with a piece of hardware
4 containing a predetermined pedigree certificate stored
5 therein, the predetermined pedigree certificate having a
6 level of trust bearing a relationship to a category of
7 hardware which the provided piece of hardware is a member
8 of; and

9 providing an automated registration arrangement
10 which can only be accessed by users having a piece of
11 hardware containing a predetermined pedigree certificate
12 having a specified level of trust stored therein;

13 wherein, upon the new user accessing the automated
14 registration arrangement using the provided piece of
15 hardware, the automated registration arrangement provides
16 the new user with an individual signature certificate having
17 a level of trust commensurate with that of the pedigree
18 certificate and wherein the automated registration
19 arrangement flags the new user's individual signature
20 certificate with the level of trust of the pedigree
21 certificate in an appropriate storage area.

1 2. The method of claim 1, further comprising
2 providing the user with at least two pieces of information,
3 wherein, upon the new user accessing the automated

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4 registration arrangement, the automated registration
5 arrangement requires the user to provide the at least two
6 pieces of information prior to providing the individual
7 signature certificate to the user.

1 3. The method of claim 2, wherein one of the at least
2 two pieces of information is provided to the user by the
3 automated registration arrangement in response to the user
4 providing an additional piece of information to the
5 automated registration arrangement.

1 4. The method of claim 2, wherein one of the at least
2 two pieces of information is provided to the user by a
3 personal registration authority.

1 5. The method of claim 3, wherein one of the at least
2 two pieces of information is provided to the user by a
3 personal registration authority.

1 6. The method of claim 2, wherein each of the at
2 least two pieces of information comprises one of either a
3 PIN (Personal Identity Number) or a password.

1 7. The method of claim 3, wherein each of the at
2 least two pieces of information comprises one of either a
3 PIN (Personal Identity Number) or a password.

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1 8. The method of claim 4, wherein each of the at
2 least two pieces of information comprises one of either a
3 PIN (Personal Identity Number) or a password.

1 9. The method of claim 5, wherein each of the at
2 least two pieces of information comprises one of either a
3 PIN (Personal Identity Number) or a password.

1 10. The method of claim 1, wherein the provided piece
2 of hardware comprises one of a personal computer or a smart
3 card or a hardware token.

1 11. The method of claim 1, wherein the automated
2 registration arrangement comprises a special registration
3 Web page.

1 12. An apparatus for automatically tracking a
2 certificate pedigree comprising:

3 a piece of hardware containing a predetermined
4 pedigree certificate stored therein, the predetermined
5 pedigree certificate having a level of trust bearing a
6 relationship to a category of hardware which the provided
7 piece of hardware is a member of; and

8 an automated registration arrangement which can
9 only be accessed by users having a piece of hardware

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10 containing a predetermined pedigree certificate having a
11 specified level of trust stored therein;

12 wherein, upon a new user accessing the automated
13 registration arrangement using the piece of hardware, the
14 automated registration arrangement provides the new user
15 with an individual signature certificate having a level of
16 trust commensurate with that of the pedigree certificate and
17 wherein the automated registration arrangement flags the new
18 user's individual signature certificate with the level of
19 trust of the pedigree certificate in an appropriate storage
20 area.

1 13. The apparatus of claim 12, further comprising at
2 least two pieces of information, wherein, upon the new user
3 accessing the automated registration arrangement, the
4 automated registration arrangement requires the user to
5 provide the at least two pieces of information prior to
6 providing the individual signature certificate to the user.

1 14. The apparatus of claim 13, wherein one of the at
2 least two pieces of information is provided to the user by
3 the automated registration arrangement in response to the
4 user providing an additional piece of information to the
5 automated registration arrangement.

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1 20. The apparatus of claim 15, wherein each of the at
2 least two pieces of information comprises one of either a
3 PIN (Personal Identity Number) or a password.

1 21. The apparatus of claim 12, wherein the piece of
2 hardware comprises one of a personal computer or a smart
3 card or a hardware token.

1 22. The apparatus of claim 12, wherein the automated
2 registration arrangement comprises a special registration
3 Web page.

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